



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No. 15-065

June 18, 2014

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LEARNING IN 44 KENTUCKY DISTRICTS WON'T STOP DUE TO BAD WEATHER

(FRANKFORT, KY) – In the upcoming school year, when bad weather hits Kentucky, students in 44 school districts will continue learning even if they aren't at school.

The Kentucky Department of Education has approved waivers that allow the districts' use of virtual or other non-traditional means of instruction when school is cancelled because of weather or another emergency. In most cases, students will participate in lessons online. Under the provisions of the waiver, a district may count up to 10 non-traditional instruction days as regular attendance days in its school calendar and not have to make them up.

"As we have been reminded in the last couple of years, weather is unpredictable and when harsh weather hits, it creates a significant hardship for both teachers and students alike," said Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. "For the last two years many of our districts were forced to close for several days or weeks at a time due to snow and cold, which not only disrupted instruction but also extended the school year for many. While we hope that this winter will not be as bad, now students in the approved districts will be able to carry on with learning – even when inclement weather keeps them out of the classroom."

The districts that qualified for the non-traditional instruction waivers are:

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| • Barren Co. | • Harlan Co. | • Madison Co. | • Pike Co. |
| • Boyle Co. | • Harlan Ind. | • Marion Co. | • Pulaski Co. |
| • Clinton Co. | • Hopkins Co. | • Martin Co. | • Russell Co. |
| • Cloverport Ind. | • Jessamine Co. | • Mason Co. | • Russell Ind. |
| • Corbin Ind. | • Johnson Co. | • Meade Co. | • Shelby Co. |
| • Elliott Co. | • Knott Co. | • Mercer Co. | • Taylor Co. |
| • Gallatin Co. | • Knox Co. | • Metcalfe Co. | • Todd Co. |
| • Garrard Co. | • Lawrence Co. | • Monroe Co. | • Webster Co. |
| • Grant Co. | • Leslie Co. | • Montgomery Co. | • Washington Co. |
| • Graves Co. | • Livingston Co. | • Nelson Co. | • Wolfe Co. |
| • Green Co. | • Logan Co. | • Owsley Co. | • Woodford Co. |

The 44 districts that received non-traditional instruction waivers for the 2015-16 school year had to submit applications that described their plans for learning while school was not in session. The applications were scored on a rubric that evaluated teaching methods, equal access to the lessons for students without Internet access, staff deployment, community engagement and assessment of student learning.

(more)

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All 173 school districts were eligible to apply for the non-traditional instruction waivers. House Bill 211 (2014), revised [KRS 158.070\(9\)](#), to allow the education commissioner to grant up to 10 student attendance days to districts that had an approved alternative instruction plan. The law also requires the district to prove how teaching and learning would not be negatively impacted. Previously only districts that missed more than 20 school days were eligible.

In the spring, districts approved for waivers will submit documentation of student and faculty participation and measurements of student learning for the missed days. The Kentucky Department of Education then will determine the number of regular attendance days granted to the district under the provisions of the waiver. During the 2014-15 school year, 13 districts participated in the program. Each was ultimately approved for between four to 10 non-traditional instructional days. Each is participating in the program again this year along with 31 districts new to the program.

For more information on the non-traditional instruction program go to

<http://education.ky.gov/school/innov/Pages/Non-Traditional-Instruction.aspx>.

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